

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00  
DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 PA-01  
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O 251625Z AUG 78  
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3610  
USICA WASHDC IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA IMMEDIATE  
AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CARACAS 8025

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR NU PN VE  
SUBJECT: VENEZUELAN AIRLIFT ENDS IN PANAMA

REF: (A) CARACAS 7968, (B) CARACAS 7967

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: PRESIDENT PEREZ PERSONALLY INFORMED THE VENEZUELAN PRESS ON AUGUST 24 THAT THE "SANDINISTA" GUERRILLAS AND THE NICARAGUAN POLITICAL PRISONERS FLYING TO VENEZUELAN ABOARD A VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE C-130 HAD ELECTED TO RAMIN IN PANAMA. PEREZ HELD AN IMPROMPTU PRESS CONFERENCE AT MAIQUEITA AIRPORT AS HE DEPALNNED FROM AN INTERNAL FLIGHT. INFORMAL TRANSLATION OF PRESS CONCERANCE AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS FOLLOWS.

2. PRESIDENT PEREZ EXPLAINED TO REPORTERS THAT WHILE HE WAS FLYING FROM THE CITY OF VALERA TO CARACAS, HE WAS INFORMED THAT THE "SANDINISTAS" HAD DECIDED TO REMAIN IN PANAMA. "I WAS CONSULTED AND SAID THAT I HAD NO OBJECTION SINCE THOSE NICARAGUAN CITIZENS ARE FREE TO STAY WHERE THEY WISH. THEREFORE, THE ENTIRE GROUP, I DON(T KNOW HOW MANY, REMAINED IN PANAMA, AND I TOLD THE  
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COMMANDER OF THE VENEZUELAN AIR FORCE PLANE TO RETURN TO ITS BASE IN MARACAY." THE PRESIDENT EXPALINED THAT VENEZUELA INTERVENED BECAUSE "IN THE FIRST PLACE, ANY CAUSE INVOLVING HUMAN RIGHTS IS THE CAUSE OF THE GOVERNMENT OF VENEZUELA. IN THE SECOND PLACE, WE WERE ASKED TO DO SO BY THE GOVERNMENT OF NICARAGUA, AND THE NICARAGUAN POLITICIANS OF THE "SANDINISTA" GROUP ALSO ASKED."

3. ONE REPORTER ASKED PEREZ WHETHER VENEZUELA WAS IMPORTING GUERRILLAS AND THE PRESIDENT REPLIED, "WE HAVE TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM AND THE FIGHT OF PEOPLES FOR THEIR LIBERATION. NON-INTERVENTION IS A SACRED PRINCIPLE FOR US. BUT NON-INTERVENTION HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE SUPRA-NATIONAL NORMS WHICH OUR COUNTRY HAS SUBSCRIBED TO WHEN IT SUBSCRIBED TO THE CHARTER OF THE UN AND WHEN WE SUBSCRIBED TO THE CHARTER OF THE OAS. THESE DOCUMENTS OBLIGE US TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS; THEY OBLIGE US TO RESPECT THE SELF-DETERMINATION OF PEOPLES; THEY OBLIGE EACH OF OUR COUNTRIES TO RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS. AND WE BELIEVE THAT THESE ARE, THEN, SUPRA-NATIONAL RIGHTS AND THAT WE HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE DENUNCIATIONS IN INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS WHEN IN SOME OF THESE COUNTRIES THOSE CHARTERS ARE NOT BEING OBSERVED. VENEZUELA HAS INSISTED THAT THE IAHRC GO TO NICARAGUA TO CARRY OUT AN INVESTIGATION. WHAT INTERESTS ME FUNDAMENTALLY IS NOT POLEMICS NOR CONFRONTATION WITH GOVERNMENTS OF THE AREA."

4. "WE NEED THE COOPERATION OF ALL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES FOR THE FIGHT WE ARE WAGING FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF ANEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL ORDER. WHAT IS DESIRABLE IS THAT IN NICARAGUA SOME KIND OF AN UNDERSTANDING BE REACHED BETWEEN ALL SECTORS OF THE POPULATION TO LIVE IN PEACE AND WITHIN A STATE WHICH AUTHENTICALLY

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OBSERVES THE RULE OF LAW. I BELIEVE THAT THE MOMENT HAS ARRIVED FOR KEEP REFLECTION SO THAT NICARAGUANS BOTH WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT AND OUTSIDE IT CAN REACH SUCH AN UNDERSTANDING. IT IS INCREDIBLE THAT A PEOPLE BE SUBMITTED TO THIS INTERMINABLE CALVARY. A WEEK DOESN'T GO BY IN WHICH DO NOT LEARN OF PEOPLE BEING KILLED, WOUNDED, ARRESTED, OR OF ATTACKS AGAINST NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT OFFICES. THAT IS TO SAY THERE IS A GROWING DISCONTENT. I BELIEVE THAT THIS IS A MATTER WHICH THE NICARAGUAN PEOPLE ITSELF MUST RESOLVE. I WOULD BE HAPPY IF I KNEW THAT THE NICARAGUAN GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED A WORTHY SOLUTION SO THAT THE BROTHER COUNTRY BE PUT ON A PATH WHICH IS AUTHENTICALLY DEMOCRATIC." IN CONCLUDING HSI COMMENTS PRESIDENT PEREZ RECALLED A PHRASE OF THE LIBERATOR (BOLIVAR) WHO SAID THAT "NOTHING CAN STOP A PEOPLE WHO WISH TO BE FREE." END UNCLASSIFIED

5. BEING CONFIDENTIAL: COMMENT: VENEZUELAN, SINCE THE OVERTHROW OF THE DICTATOR PEREZ JIMENEZ, HAVE BEEN VERY CONSCIOUS OF "INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM" WHICH THEY EQUATED ORIGINALLY WITH EFFORTS BY THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC'S TRUJILLO TO ELIMINATE HIS ENEMIES ABROAD. TRUJILLO'S UNSUCCESSFUL

ATTEMPT TO ASSASSINATE PRESIDENT BETANCOURT IS THE  
IMAGE INSTANTLY CALLED TO MIND IN VENEZUELA. TO A LESSER  
EXTENT "INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM" IS ALSO SYNONYMOUS HERE WITH  
CASTRO'S EFFORTS TO SUPPORT GUERRILLAS IN VENEZUELA IN  
THE 1960'S. DURING THE PEREZ ADMINISTRATION, "INTERNATIONAL  
TERRORISM" HAS BEEN EXPANDED BY PEREZ HIMSELF TO INCLUDE  
THE ATTACK CARRIED OUT AGAINST THE CUBANA AIRLINES IN WHICH  
73 PERSONS DIED AND HAS PREDISPOSED THE GOV TO COOPERATE  
IN THE UN AND ELSEWHERE WITH EFFORTS TO MOBILIZE INTER-  
NATIONAL OPINION AND ACTIONS AGAINST TERRORISM OF ANY  
KIND. PEREZ' DISTINCTION BETWEEN "INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM"  
AND THE "FIGHT OF PEOPLES FOR THEIR LIBERATION" IS NEW  
AND WILL NO DOUBT CAUSE HIM SOME DISCOMFORT IN ADDRESSING  
SUCH PROBLEMS AS CUBAN INTERVENTION IN AFRICA (WHICH HE  
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OPPOSES) AND POSSIBLE CUBAN INTERVENTION IN THE HEMISPHERE  
(WHICH HE BOTH FEARS AND OPPOSES), AND PERHAPS EVEN THE ACTIVITIES  
OF THE MINISCULE GROUP OF VENEZUELAN GUERRILLAS WHO OCCASIONAL SEIZE  
SMALL TOWNS FOR A FEW HOURS OR SHOOT UP A GOV GUARD POST.

6. THIS CRISIS (AS ARE VIRTUALLY ALL CRISES IN VENEZUELA)  
WAS HANDLED DIRECTLY BY PRESIDENT PEREZ. FOREIGN MINISTER  
CONSALVI WAS VISITING PERU THE ENTIRE TIME. HIS COMMENTS  
AS REPORTED HEREIN ARE LAMOST QUINTESSENTIAL PEREZ. THEY  
DEMONSTRATE HIS ACTIVISM, HIS DEEP ATTACHMENT TO AND  
BELIEF IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE RIGHT OF ASYLUM. THEY  
SHOW ALSO HIS IMPULSIVENESS AND HIS BOLIVARIAN BENT.  
FINALLY, HIS COMMENTS ALSO REFLECT HIS BELIEF THAT HIS  
VIEWS ABOUT THE INVIABILITY OF SOMOZA HAVE BEEN VINDICATED.  
NO DOUBT HE WILL BE BACK TO USG BEFORE LONG ENCOURAGING  
USG TO PUT PRESSURE ON SOMOZA TO LEAVE BEFORE 1981. END COMMENT.  
END CONFIDENTIAL.  
CROWLEY

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## Message Attributes

**Automatic Decaptioning:** X  
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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MILITARY AIRLIFTS, TERRORISTS, POLITICAL PRISONERS  
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**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 25 aug 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 01 jan 1960  
**Decaption Note:**  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
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**Type:** TE  
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